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ABSTRACT

This report makes policy implementers and educators aware of the importance of work attendance and its relation to student outcomes. It also encourages policymakers to better implement and supplement existing policies through different strategy options. The focus is on the Pacific region. Rather than recommending a punitive approach, the report offers research-based recommendations that focus on incentive-based systems in which intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are the keys to encouraging teacher attendance. Section 1 discusses what research says about teacher attendance, student attendance, and student achievement. Section 2 focuses on teacher absenteeism in the Pacific region, explaining that the absenteeism rate there is significantly higher than the U.S. national average. Section 3 looks at personnel leave policies in the Pacific region. Section 4 discusses policy implementation in culturally diverse settings. Section 5 examines promising practices in implementing teacher attendance policies (e.g., use incentives to improve teacher attendance, solicit teacher participation in policy planning, and allow unlimited accumulation of sick days). Section 6 highlights 13 recommendations for addressing teacher absenteeism. Three appendixes present data on teacher absences in the Pacific region and a sample operational plan for improving teacher attendance. (Contains 27 references.) (SM)

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POLICY REPORT

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A POLICY REPORT ON TEACHER ATTENDANCE IN THE PACIFIC REGION

By

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> You can revise curriculums, toughen graduation requirements, and sing the song of excellence until you're hoarse: If teachers fail to show up for work, all your good intentions will wither on the boardroom floor. (Freeman & Grant, 1987, p. 31)

Where is our teacher? This is a question that many Pacific island students must ask, perhaps too often. While skipping class or "playing hooky" is a common occurrence among students, the number of *teachers* who also have poor attendance records is surprising. Previous inquiries have exposed the issues associated with student absenteeism (Browkowski & Dempsey, 1979; Boloz & Lincoln, 1983; National Center for Education Statistics, 1995; Strickland, 1998). But what happens when it is the teacher who frequently does not come to school? Not surprisingly, research shows that high teacher absenteeism negatively affects student performance. What, then, does a school system need to do to encourage teacher attendance? Particularly in the Pacific region, policy implementation is sorely needed. Although personnel leave policies are in place, these policies are not enforced in many instances.

The task of this report is two-fold: 1) Make policy implementers and educators aware of the importance of work attendance and its relation to student outcomes; and 2) encourage policymakers to better implement and supplement existing policies through different strategy options. Rather than recommending a punitive approach, this report offers research-based recommendations that focus on incentive-based systems in which intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are the keys to encouraging teacher attendance.

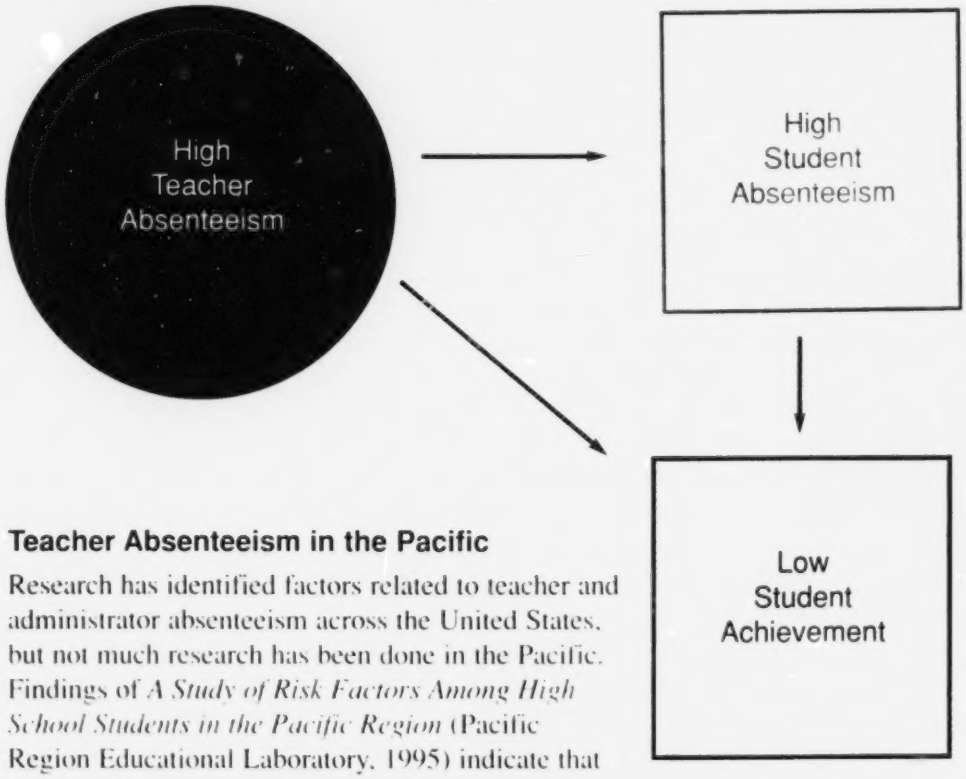
What Research Says about Teacher Attendance, Student Attendance, and Student Achievement

As might be expected, teacher attendance affects student attendance. Teachers often serve as role models and influence students' perceptions about acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Additionally, chronic teacher absenteeism sends an underlying message that school attendance is not important. In this wave of reform, with its push for teacher professionalism, consistent attendance is one of several important qualities of a good classroom teacher (Chubb & Moe, 1990). In addition, in many parts of the Pacific region, if teachers are not in the classroom, students are not, either.

Research also shows that teacher absenteeism has a negative correlation with student outcomes (Madden, Flanigan, & Richardson, 1991; Pitkoff, 1993; Ballou, 1996; Woods & Montagno, 1997). That is, as the number of days that a teacher is absent increases, the level of student achievement decreases. The findings from Lewis (1981) indicate that the presence of a classroom teacher is an important factor in education, especially for average-achieving students.

Thus, teacher absenteeism is related to both student absenteeism and achievement. Figure 1 provides a simple graphical representation of the interrelated factors that strongly affect student outcomes, as indicated by research. High teacher absenteeism could be one of the reasons why many Pacific island students do not fare well on standardized tests.

Figure 1



Teacher Absenteeism in the Pacific

Research has identified factors related to teacher and administrator absenteeism across the United States, but not much research has been done in the Pacific. Findings of *A Study of Risk Factors Among High School Students in the Pacific Region* (Pacific Region Educational Laboratory, 1995) indicate that teacher absenteeism, among other factors, places Pacific students at risk for school failure. Since no substitute teacher pool exists in many of the U.S.-affiliated Pacific entities[1], high teacher absenteeism is a genuine concern in the region. There might not be a teacher present to instruct students who attend school. Because of high rates of teacher absenteeism, student educational opportunities are being denied, resulting in a negative effect on student achievement levels. Given that there are no funds for a substitute pool, students are typically sent home.

As a result of the study mentioned above, the Board of Directors at Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) requested follow-up research that addresses teacher and administrator risk factors in the Pacific region. Members of the PREL Research and Development Cadre[2] were interested in studying these

[1] Entities refer to the ten U.S.-affiliated Pacific island groups: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap—Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

risk factors within their respective entities. Furthermore, school administrators in the ten entities were also interested in teacher attendance and its impact on student achievement.

In many places in the Pacific region, when teachers are not in the classroom, the students are not, either.

In response to these concerns, a study was conducted during the 1996-1997 school year: *Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators* (RAPSTA; Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, 1998). Teachers in all ten entities answered questionnaires about their days away from school, their desire to leave teaching, and their possible reasons for leaving. They also rated their levels of workplace stress using an adapted version of the 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)–Educators Survey (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986). The RAPSTA study identified teacher absenteeism as a problem that needs to be addressed. A significant relationship was found between teacher stress and number of days away from school, even though the study was not able to pinpoint the exact causes of absenteeism. (To learn about techniques and strategies for reducing stress, particularly within the cultures in the Pacific region, read PREL's *Coping with Teacher Stress* research synthesis [Brown & Uehara, 1999].)

Results of the RAPSTA study showed that, across all entities, the average number of days away from school during school year 1996-1997 was 11, ranging from 5 to 22. This average is significantly higher than the United States national average of seven sick and personal leave days per teacher (Freeman & Grant, 1987). Figure 2 illustrates the average number of days that teachers were absent in each entity. Although many did not exceed the number of days allotted for each entity's leave policy, those that did far surpassed the acceptable number. Figure 3 shows the top five reasons why teachers were away from the classroom: personal illness, funerals, meetings and workshops, sickness in the family, and vacation. A wide variety of other reasons for absence were also reported (see Appendix A). Figures 4 through 8 depict average number of days away per teacher during the 1996-1997 school year. Each figure corresponds to one of the above-mentioned five reasons and includes data for all ten entities.

[2] PREL's Research and Development Cadre is a group of Pacific educators consisting of one member from each Department or Ministry of Education in the ten entities comprising PREL's service region, and one member representing the National Department of Education, Federated States of Micronesia.

Figure 2
Average Number of Days Teachers Are Away from School by Entity

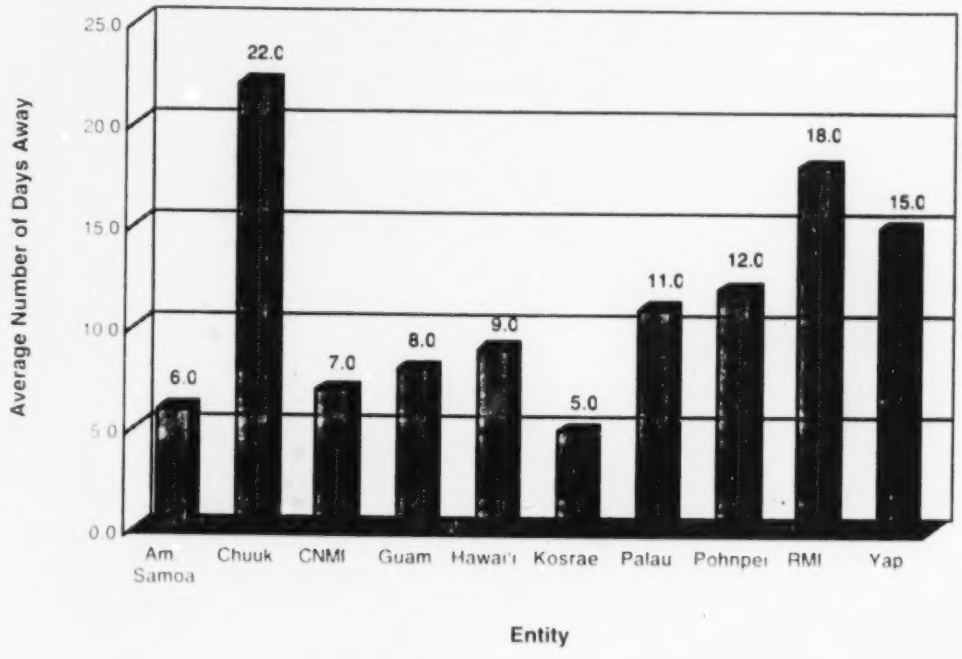


Figure 3
Average Number of Days Teachers Are Away by Top Five Reasons

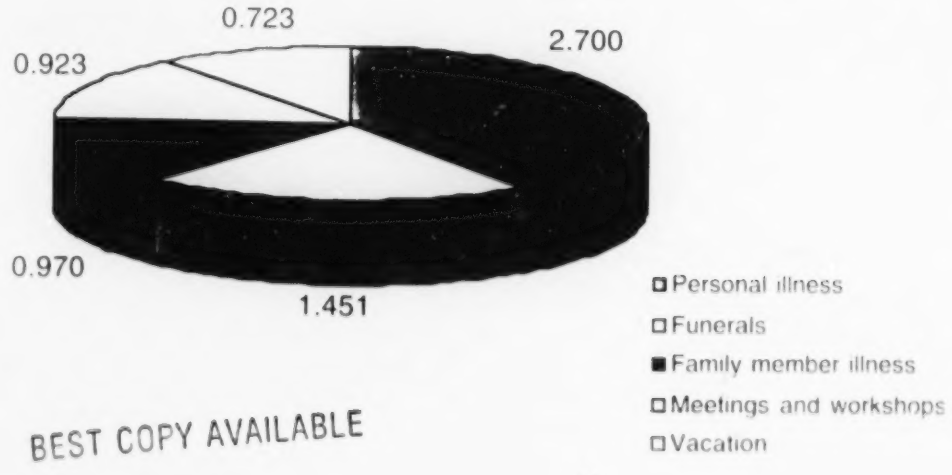


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Figure 4
Personal Illness

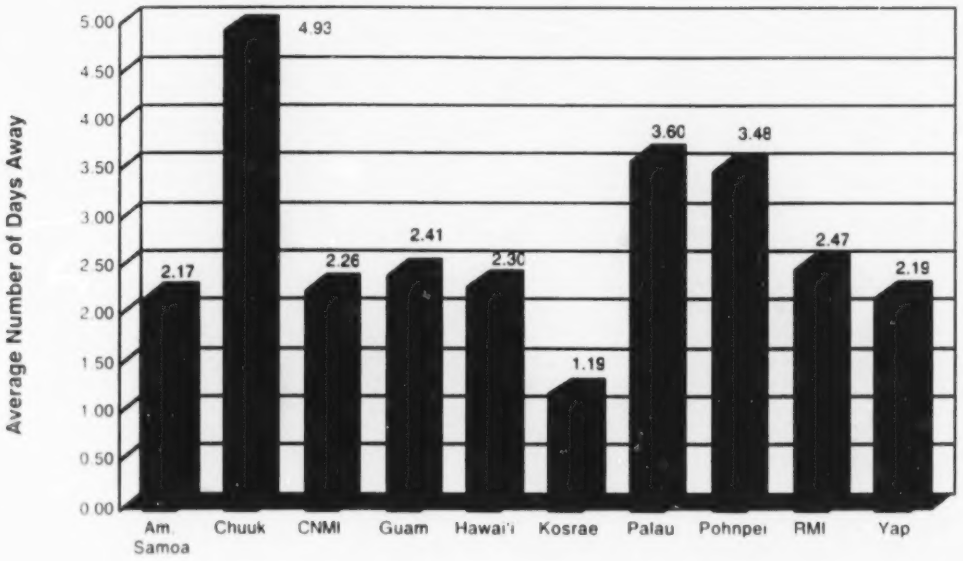

Figure 5
Funeral Leave

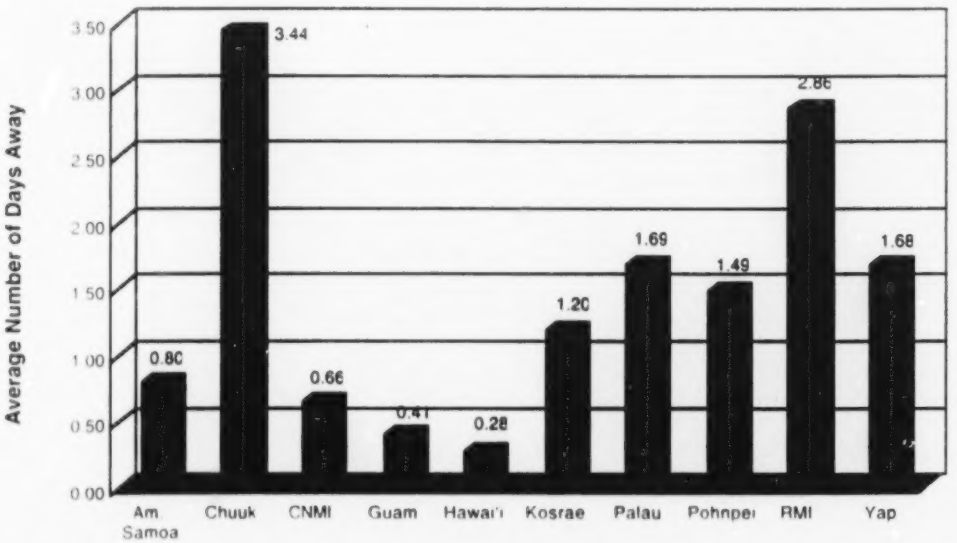

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Figure 6
Family Member Illness

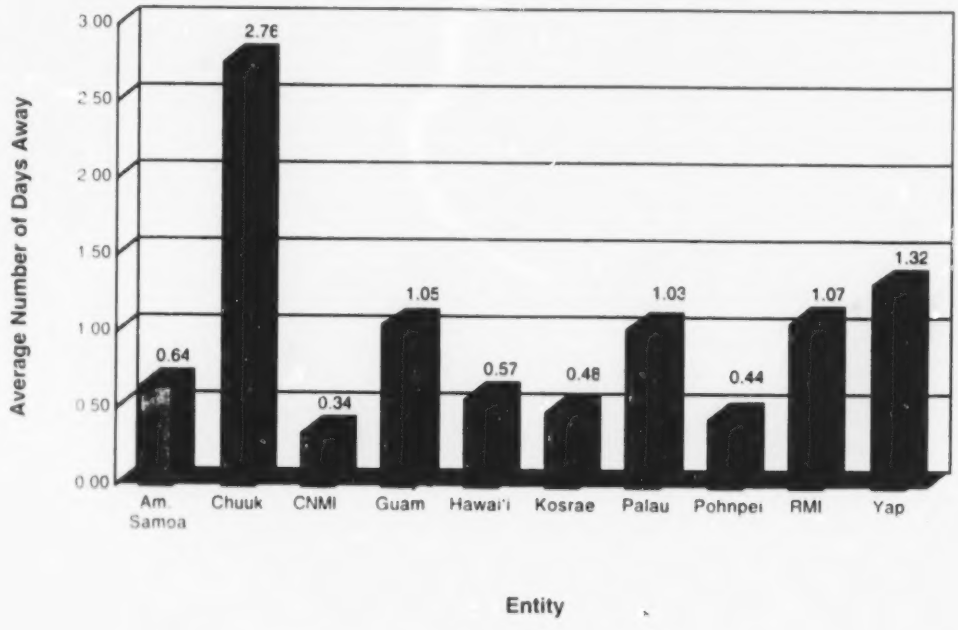

Figure 7
Meetings and Workshops

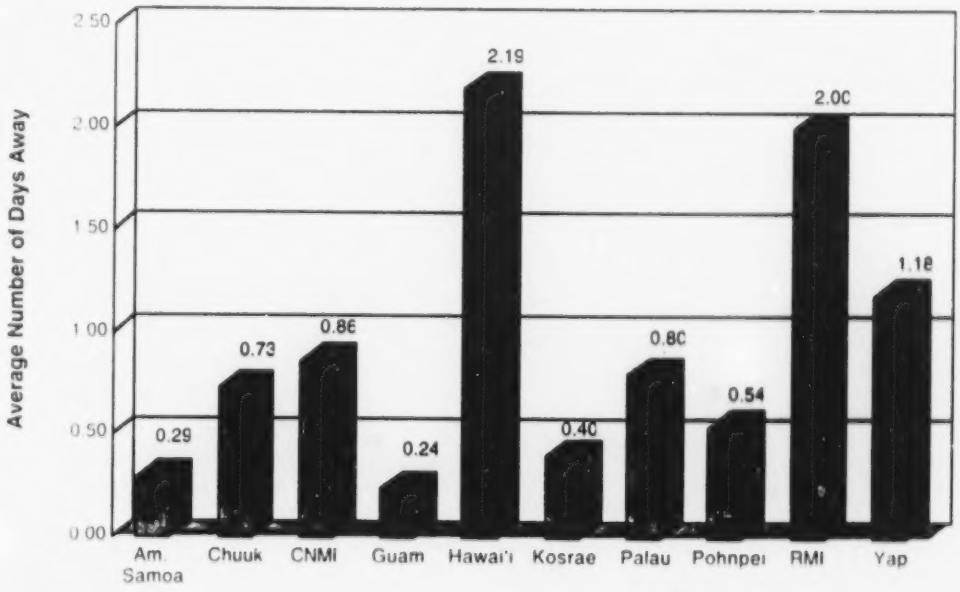

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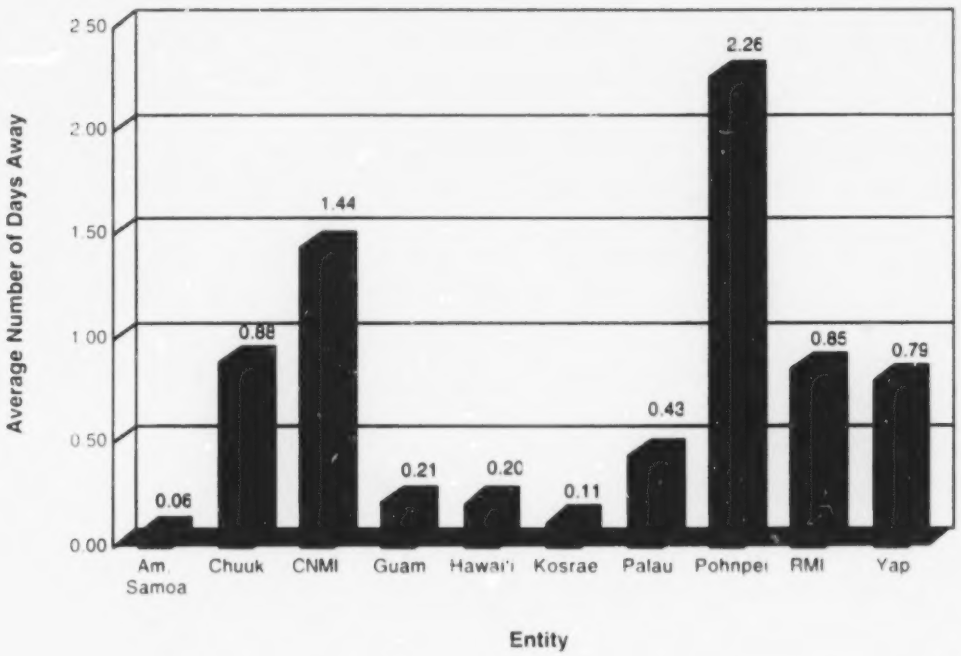
Figure 8
Vacation



Some of the reasons are immediate concerns for teachers (Scott & Wimbush, 1991), and others are inevitable life events, which have unique cultural implications for Pacific Islanders. Funerals, for example, are events in which participation is culturally required. When a funeral is held for a relative or in-law, family members are obligated to attend. In some instances, mourning the death of a family member can take anywhere from three to five days, or longer if the funeral takes place on an outer island. This cultural responsibility inevitably results in an educator's absence from school.

The unusually high rate of absenteeism among Pacific educators, as found in the RAPSTA study, generated much interest to further explore the implications of low teacher attendance. As a result, the following tasks were conducted:

- An analysis of world-wide school personnel leave policies;
- A review of the literature on strategies to improve teacher attendance; and
- An examination of the cultural context in the Pacific.

A Look at Personnel Leave Policies

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Personnel leave policies were reviewed from each Department or Ministry of Education in the ten entities. PREL specifically examined the number of days allowed for sick leave, annual leave, and funeral leave. For the most part, almost

all entities have a policy in place to govern these types of absences. In fact, these policies do not differ significantly from other school policies across the nation and in other developed countries.

However, the number of days allotted for sick, annual, and bereavement leave varies across entities (see Appendix B). In some places, absences for funeral leave are not included in the leave policy. In other places, the number of funeral days allowed is not culturally feasible. Funeral procedures typically last between three and five days for most of the entities. The funeral process includes preparation, mourning, and offerings to family members. Often, the funeral is held on an outer island, and travel time can take a day or more. As the RAPSTA findings show, leave policies should take into consideration the implications of culturally relevant events that affect the lives of educators in the Pacific region.

The number of days allotted for sick leave ranges from 4.5 days to 19 days, with an average of 12. In most entities, a note is required after a specified number of consecutive days are missed. For example, in American Samoa, if a teacher misses school because of sickness for more than three days, a doctor's note verifying illness is required upon return. In CNMI and Kosrae State, however, a doctor's note is required for all days that sick leave is used. Not surprisingly, these two entities have a low number of sick leaves taken.

In some entities, the number of annual leave days that are granted increases in proportion to the number of years of employment—teachers accumulate a certain number of vacation days according to their years of service. In several entities, teachers are considered public government employees or civil servants, and are therefore subject to those rules and regulations. In some entities, vacation days are not awarded since teachers are off during the summer.

Policy Implementation in Culturally Diverse Settings

Personnel leave policies exist in each entity's Department or Ministry of Education. These, however, have been patterned after policies for U.S. school systems and do not take the diverse cultures and lifestyles of the Pacific into account. Therefore, the problem of personnel leave policies is their implementation, rather than their non-existence. Greater consideration to cultural context is in order, as Pacific educators grapple with the issue of implementation of teacher attendance policies. As noted by the Asian Development Bank (1995), "Policy guidelines do not automatically translate into improved educational conditions. The final challenge on the path toward successful implementation is cultural accommodation" (p. 126).

In his article *Why Don't Government Offices Work?*, Francis Hezel (1999) discusses the government management system in Micronesia and the surrounding cultural norms that dictate how the system is put into practice. Problems with operations are often attributed to "inefficient government," but they are more

likely caused by cultural difficulties—problems that result from the collision of opposing values, as an imposed U.S. government system is sculpted to fit an island setting. For example, in communal settings like the ones found in most of the Pacific region, sanctions can be difficult to enforce. The principal is typically a member of the village in which the school is located and probably knows each teacher and each family intimately. Often, maintaining good relationships is more important than enforcing policy. Likewise, family obligations such as participation in funerals take precedence over work obligations. The dilemma becomes how to meet work responsibilities and students' needs without failing to meet one's own personal responsibilities.

One way to incorporate the cultural context in policy implementation is to involve the people affected by the policy. A study of policies and practices regarding tobacco use in various Native American settings identified the importance of involving the indigenous community in policy development. This study recognized that policies developed by American Indian agencies—rather than those determined by state, local, or federal governments—were more effectively implemented (Hall, Lichtenstein, Burhansstipanov, Davis, Hodge, Schinke, Singer, Fredericks, & Glasgow, 1995).

This type of policy development is highly desirable in the Pacific region. It is likely that teachers in the Pacific will be more receptive to policy changes and enforcement if they are involved in the process, from development to implementation. Another important aspect is the consideration of the community's cultural context when making or changing policy. The studies that follow describe how incentive programs can positively affect teacher attendance. The challenge for Pacific policymakers and implementers is to align policy with cultural norms and practices. Through cultural integration and participant involvement, Pacific educators can make substantial changes in their attendance behavior, and thus, increase learning opportunities for students.

Promising Practices in Implementing Teacher Attendance Policies

The findings from the RAPSTA study indicated that Kosrae State teachers had the lowest average number of days away from work during the 1996-97 school year—five days. This low rate of absenteeism could be the result of the practices that are being effectively implemented in this state. Several schools in Kosrae State have developed a novel approach to dealing with absenteeism. One example that illustrates Kosrae State's strategy for decreasing teacher absenteeism is the following:

In the event of a funeral, close community and family ties prompt several teachers to take leave from school in order to attend or prepare for the solemn occasion. The principal, along with the teachers, closes school for the day (or days), and they agree to make up these days in the future. These make-up days may take place on subsequent Saturdays or may extend past the scheduled school

year. In the case where only a few teachers request leave, classes are combined, and the remaining teachers cover the classes. Most Kosrae schools use team teaching, which makes for an easy adjustment when available teachers combine classes to cover the students of a teacher on leave.

The following strategies and practices to improve teacher attendance are supported by research and have been used in school districts across the nation. Based on cultural information provided by Pacific educators and community members, the author concludes that an incentive-based approach would be most successful in the region.

Use incentives to improve teacher attendance—One study in a New York school district compared teacher absence immediately before and after implementation of a new attendance incentive plan (Jacobson, 1988). The study used monetary rewards as the incentive. Funds were appropriated by the State Legislature to be used specifically for salary improvement, which were distributed in two ways: 1) as year-end bonuses, and 2) as a pool from which the teachers could draw one share for each leave day not used, up to a maximum of seven. The exact dollar amount was determined after the final day of the school year. Since the state required that all funds be used, a sense of fair play prevailed throughout the year. Results showed that after one year, the average number of absences per teacher declined by almost two days and the total number of teachers with perfect attendance quadrupled.

At some schools, rewards include bonus pay, recognition dinners, paid tuition for professional improvement, partial or full payment of accumulated sick leave as severance pay, or conversion of sick leave to personal or vacation days (*Absent Teachers*, 1979; Hill, 1982; Madden, Flanigan, & Richardson, 1991). In other districts, upon retirement, unused sick days are bought back, resulting in lower leave usage (Ehrenberg, Ehrenberg, Rees, & Ehrenberg, 1989). Hill (1982) described a New Jersey Board of Education that allows the teacher with the best attendance record each month to leave school early one day during the following month. In other districts, simple letters of recognition are effective.

Solicit teacher participation in policy planning—Some research indicates that when policies reflect teachers' beliefs, the teachers are more likely to adhere to the policies and feel better about their work environment. Chubb and Moe (1990) found that principals of effective schools encourage teachers to participate in planning and policymaking outside of the classroom. In addition, these administrators value the teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and judgments.

A study by Eisenhart, Cuthbert, Shrum, and Harding (1988) investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs about their work and the extent to which they are willing to implement educational policy. As a result of this study, the researchers recommended that policy development should be a venue for open discussion among all key players on equal terms. This approach can encourage

the sharing, examining, and negotiating of beliefs and can contribute to effective policy implementation.

Allow unlimited accumulation of sick leave days—Through this approach, teachers accumulate un-used sick leave days that will carry over each year. This reassures employees that they do not have to "use them or lose them." It also deters senior employees who have exhibited good attendance from taking days off due to a lack of reimbursement (Hill, 1982; Pitkoff, 1993).

Make good attendance a requisite for job tenure and continuation of employment—Good attendance should be an important factor in both beginning teacher appraisals and as a component of teacher evaluations for employment continuation (Gendler, 1977; Hill, 1982). At the end of every school year, administrators should evaluate teacher attendance patterns and include attendance as a criterion for contract renewal for both beginning and tenured teachers.

Require teachers to speak with the principal when calling in sick—The practice of requiring teachers to personally speak with the principal when calling in sick was found to be very effective in Pennsylvania schools (Pennsylvania School Boards Association, 1978). Another effective technique identified was the practice of the principal maintaining contact with the absent teacher throughout the absence; additionally, the principal was expected to speak personally to the absent teacher upon return to the classroom. Included in this process was a comprehensive attendance record system and the provision of special counseling for teachers with high absentee rates.

Hold administrators accountable for administering policies—Superintendents of the Merrick, New York school district were able to reduce 55 percent of their teacher absences by including criteria for teacher attendance within district policy. This strategy holds administrators fully accountable for implementing the new policies. Principals were asked to closely monitor the attendance patterns in their schools and to immediately discuss inconsistent attendance with individual teachers (Gendler, 1977).

Recommendations to Address Teacher Absenteeism

Effective instruction guided by a competent teacher cannot happen when the teacher is not present. How can students be expected to achieve if their teachers are not in school? A concerted effort towards the development and implementation of a culturally appropriate teacher attendance policy is essential for the improvement of Pacific education. The following are recommendations for policymakers and principals to consider:

1. If there are no specific leave policies in place, **develop effective policies that reflect the cultural and professional environment**. Review other school district leave policies, and formulate alternatives that take into

account the possibilities of long-term absences because of funerals or personal illnesses.

2. Encourage administrators to **enforce existing policies** by providing regular policy updates and in-service sessions. Hold administrators responsible for their staff attendance records by conducting quarterly reviews.

3. **Offer incentives** on a quarterly or yearly basis, relative to attendance performance. These incentives could be in the form of:
   - Monetary compensation for unused leave;
   - Off-island training;
   - Cash bonus at the end of the year;
   - Certificate/recognition as part of graduation ceremonies or education week, or at the end of the summer program;
   - Public recognition at church or community gatherings;
   - District attendance reports in newspapers;
   - *Teacher of the Month* programs in which schools recognize teachers who have perfect attendance;
   - Promotion opportunities;
   - Unused annual leave days paid at the end of the year.

4. **Allow unlimited accumulation of sick leave** tied to incentives such as:
   - Service credits of 1 month per 60 days of unused sick leave;
   - Cash buy-back programs of $1 per day of unused sick leave;
   - Paid compensation of at least 10% of unused leave at the end of the school year.

5. **Develop an effective data collection and reporting system** for student and staff attendance. For example, as part of the morning routine, teachers might be required to sign in prior to going to their classrooms. The sign-in sheet is kept on file and used by the principal for quarterly reviews. Similarly, student attendance should be taken, in the morning for elementary school students and at the beginning of each class period or subject for high school students, and reported to the central office.

6. **Encourage contribution of sick leave pay to a "substitute fund"** by providing in-service sessions about the benefits and consequences of lost teaching time. For example, teachers who have unused sick leave can donate those days to a fund that will pay for a substitute teacher. A substitute teacher can be the principal, a parent, or another teacher who agrees to take on the extra responsibility. This "substitute fund" will ensure that there is a staff member in the classroom when a teacher is absent. Along with a fund, it is vital to emphasize the importance of consistent lesson planning and preparation: If a teacher is going to be absent, advance class preparation is necessary if a substitute teacher—or, in the Pacific region, the principal—will be teaching the class (*Absent Teachers*, 1979).

7. **Develop partnerships with local businesses** that can reward teachers for exemplary attendance. For example, teachers could redeem good attendance records at the district office for various coupons and discounts at local stores.

8. **Form a trained parent volunteer team** to provide substitutes when a teacher is absent. School- or grade-level teams can help ensure adequate classroom coverage. Recruit parents at the end of the school year to serve as substitute teachers for the following year. Training can be held during the summer, culminating with a certificate from either the school or the district office.

9. **Issue school and department report cards** that include attendance rates of:

Principals	Custodians
Teachers	Support Staff
Aides	Cafeteria Workers

These report cards can be publicized through news and radio releases, flyers, church assemblies, PTA meetings, and/or oral presentations at community sessions.

10. **Develop partnerships between the Department or Ministry of Education and traditional leaders** such as village chiefs and community elders, and provide information about the issues related to teacher absenteeism in order to gain their support in reinforcing teacher attendance.

11. **Set reasonable standards** on the number of days to be taken for bereavement, annual, and sick leave. Account for cultural practices and environmental factors that have an impact on attendance.

12. **Include exemplary attendance among the criteria** for awarding *Teacher of the Year* recognition.

13. Encourage local educators to **develop their own solutions** to the problem of low attendance. At staff meetings, administrators can solicit ideas from teachers and develop policies based on teachers' input. This process gives teachers ownership of newly implemented policies.

A sample operational plan to improve teacher attendance can be found in Appendix C.

Conclusion

This report began with the question *Where is our teacher?*—a question asked by many Pacific island students. While it is true that student absenteeism is a concern addressed by administrators, teachers, and parents, the issue of high teacher absenteeism is often ignored, especially in the Pacific region. After reviewing existing literature, examining the policies that govern teacher leave, and exploring the cultural context in which the policies are implemented, it is apparent that effective implementation and appropriate supplementation of existing policies are greatly needed. Research-based recommendations and qualitative resources, along with this report's suggestions, provide a concrete starting point from which Pacific school systems can move forward in improving teacher attendance throughout the region.

Pacific administrators, educators, students, and families continue to negotiate between two worlds: the U.S.-administered school system and an island setting rich in culture and tradition. The "Pacific way" remains a strong force in the lives of Pacific Islanders. Not surprisingly, policies that are imposed from outside the community, and that do not accommodate culture and environment, are difficult to implement. By exploring different strategy options and by taking an incentive-based approach, administrators, working together with teachers, will be able to improve teacher attendance patterns. This improvement will ultimately lead to significant gains in the learning of Pacific children.

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	Average # of Days Absent										Regional Average
TOTAL	**6.04**	**22.32**	**6.83**	**8.19**	**8.96**	**5.38**	**10.58**	**12.28**	**18.13**	**15.04**	**11.375**

Reason	Am. Samoa	Chuuk	CNMI	Guam	Hawai'i	Kosrae	Palau	Pohnpei	RMI	Yap	Regional Total
Administrative leave	0.01	1.47	0.12	0.43	0.07	0.24	0.40	0.57	0.41	0.12	3.84
Birthdays	-----	0.19	0.01	0.04	0.01	-----	0.19	0.05	0.26	0.03	0.78
Child care	0.27	0.77	0.04	0.32	0.15	0.10	0.38	0.51	0.28	1.14	3.96
Church activities	0.11	0.69	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.08	0.28	0.64	0.05	1.94
Community responsibilities	0.06	0.57	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.12	0.03	0.15	0.24	0.42	1.67
Educational leave	0.08	0.23	0.05	0.44	0.20	0.12	0.60	0.17	1.58	2.75	6.22
Family member sick	**0.64**	**2.76**	**0.34**	**1.05**	**0.57**	**0.48**	**1.03**	**0.44**	**1.07**	**1.32**	**9.70**
Family responsibilities	0.19	0.84	0.07	0.34	0.29	0.10	0.57	0.23	0.38	0.28	3.29
Funerals	**0.80**	**3.44**	**0.66**	**0.41**	**0.28**	**1.20**	**1.69**	**1.49**	**2.86**	**1.68**	**14.51**
Jury duty	0.02	0.07	0.01	0.08	0.11	0.03	0.02	0.03	-----	-----	0.37
Lack of instructional materials	-----	0.07	-----	-----	-----	0.08	0.04	0.05	0.58	0.13	0.95
Maternity leave	0.41	1.15	0.17	0.46	1.21	0.67	0.26	0.30	0.41	1.11	6.15
Meetings and workshops	**0.29**	**0.73**	**0.86**	**0.24**	**2.19**	**0.40**	**0.80**	**0.54**	**2.00**	**1.18**	**9.23**
Military training	0.15	-----	-----	0.51	0.06	-----	-----	0.06	-----	-----	0.78
Other	0.22	0.66	0.38	0.47	0.72	0.09	0.08	0.11	0.05	0.18	2.96
Paternity leave	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.04	-----	-----	0.03	-----	0.03	0.22
Personal illness	**2.17**	**4.93**	**2.26**	**2.41**	**2.30**	**1.19**	**3.60**	**3.48**	**2.47**	**2.19**	**27.00**
Relationship with co-workers	0.01	0.01	0.02	-----	0.03	-----	0.01	0.04	-----	0.01	0.13
Relationship with supervisors	0.03	0.19	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.10	0.65
Storm, heavy rain, flood, etc	0.19	1.00	0.07	0.30	0.02	0.10	0.01	0.36	0.65	0.98	3.68
Stress	0.02	0.11	0.09	0.11	0.18	0.05	0.13	0.22	0.34	0.14	1.39
Suspension	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	0.14	-----	-----	-----	0.08	0.22
Training leave	0.08	0.65	0.12	0.06	0.14	0.04	0.09	0.07	2.09	0.12	3.46
Transportation problem	0.08	0.61	-----	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.04	0.67	0.38	0.13	2.01
Vacation	**0.06**	**0.88**	**1.44**	**0.21**	**0.20**	**0.11**	**0.43**	**2.26**	**0.85**	**0.79**	**7.23**
Wedding	0.09	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.06	-----	-----	-----	0.04	0.01	0.35
Working conditions	0.03	0.22	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.12	0.46	0.11	1.22

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ENTITY	# Days Absent (RAPSTA)	# of Allowable Absences				Notes	Consequences for Excess Absenteeism
		Sick Leave	With Doctor's Note	Annual Leave	Funeral Leave		
American Samoa	6	12	Yes, 3 or more	None	?	Teachers are nine-month employees and are not eligible for annual leave.	None
Chuuk State	22	12	Yes, 3 or more	12-45	5	Leave request form is required for 3 or more annual leave days	None
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	7	4.5	Yes, all sick absences	6-9	5	Leave can be denied if it conflicts with Board Policy 403.	None
Guam	8	13	Yes, 4 or more	3*	**	* Personal Leave ** Can be used as sick leave	None
Hawai'i	9	18-19	Yes, 6 or more	3*	3-5	* Personal Leave	None
Kosrae State	5	9	Yes, all sick absences	9-15	4		None
Pohnpei State	12	12	Yes, 2 or more	13	2		None
Republic of the Marshall Islands	18	13	Yes, 2 or more	30***	5	*** 80 hours during the school year, 1 week before and 1 week after Christmas, and 80 hours during summer	None
Republic of Palau	11	12	Yes, 3 or more	12-24	5		None
Yap State	15	12	Yes, 3 or more	12-24	5		Letter of Reprimand/ Suspension/ Dismissal

The number of days allotted for sick, annual, and bereavement leave varies across entities. Some places do not provide for funeral leave; in other places, the number of allowed days is not culturally feasible.

Some entities have a range of days allotted for annual leave because the number of years of employment determines the number of days allowed.

Hawai'i allots a range of days for sick and funeral leave because some teachers are employed ten months out of the year, while others are employed for twelve months.

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Appendix C

Sample Operational Plan

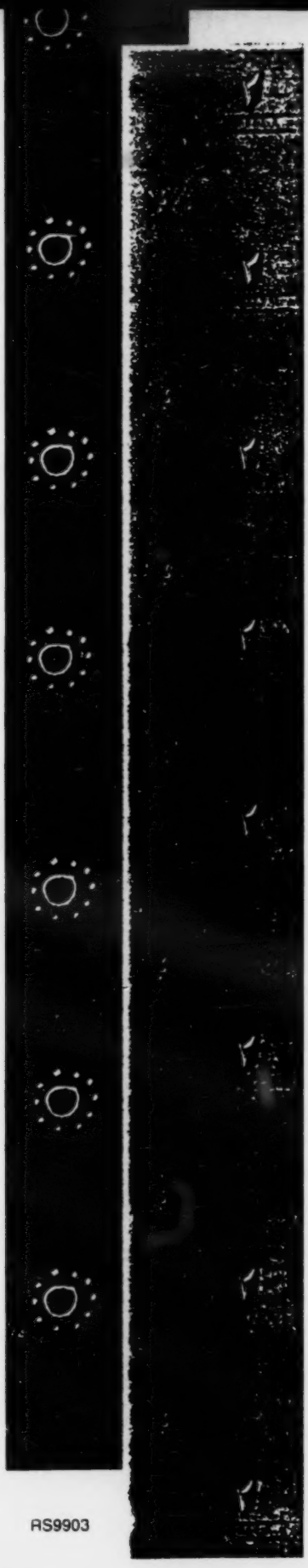
The following sample provides schools and school districts with a general plan of operation to improve teacher attendance. The plan can be modified to fit different school needs.

Step 1. **Convene teachers.** This initial step is the most important: It builds teacher support and cooperation. School administrators and district personnel need to meet with teachers to discuss and plan strategies that encourage teacher attendance. A review of current leave policies and new ideas for policy implementation should be on the agenda. Strategies such as community partnerships, team teaching, parent volunteer teams, and Saturday makeup days must be agreed upon.

Step 2. **Develop a school-wide data collection instrument.** This can be either a specific form to be filled out or a computerized procedure that tracks attendance of all school personnel and students.

Step 3. **Disseminate information.** Once agreements have been reached with teachers and administrators, communicate with the public. This effort will help solicit support and resources from the community to ensure success of the plan.

Step 4. **Publish a quarterly report card for the school.** After the attendance data have been collected and analyzed, public announcements through radio/news releases and flyers, and during PTA and church meetings can be made. Community acknowledgement of improved attendance rates serves to both motivate and reward schools and individual teachers. This also shows children that administrators, teachers, and community members care about their education.



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